



St Hilary's Prep School Policy

Infection Control Policy

This policy sets out how St Hilary's School prevents and responds to infection among pupils, staff and visitors, including in its early years provision. It supports safe attendance and learning while protecting people at greater risk. Staff must use the current UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance and public health exclusion table when managing a particular infection; health protection team advice takes precedence for an incident or outbreak.

Scope and responsibilities

The Headmaster has overall responsibility. The Business Manager coordinates premises, cleaning, supplies and contractor arrangements. The designated first aid lead supports incident records and staff guidance. Early years leaders apply this policy alongside the current statutory early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework. All staff follow hygiene procedures, report concerns promptly and protect confidential health information. Catering staff and contractors follow their relevant food safety and health and safety procedures.

The school maintains suitable infection and cleaning risk assessments under its health and safety arrangements, reviews controls when circumstances change and provides staff with instruction, equipment and supervision. This policy should be read with the first aid, medical needs, safeguarding, attendance, food safety, COSHH, cleaning and emergency plans.

Routine prevention

Hand and respiratory hygiene

- Provide liquid soap, warm running water and paper towels. Staff and pupils wash hands after using the toilet, before eating or handling food, after play, after handling animals and after contact with bodily fluids. Teach and supervise younger children as needed.
- Alcohol hand gel may be used when hands are not visibly dirty, but soap and water are essential after toileting and for diarrhoea and vomiting illnesses such as norovirus.
- Cover cuts with waterproof dressings. Use a tissue for coughs and sneezes, bin it and clean hands; cough into the elbow if a tissue is unavailable. Discourage spitting.

Ventilation, cleaning and equipment

Keep occupied rooms well ventilated while maintaining a safe and comfortable environment. The premises team monitors ventilation and cleaning arrangements. Cleaning schedules identify tasks, frequency, responsible staff and checks, including toilets, frequently touched surfaces, shared equipment and early years toys. Detergent and water normally suffice for routine cleaning; use disinfectant where indicated by the risk assessment, product instructions or HPT advice. Clean and dry reusable equipment appropriately, use separate colour-coded equipment by area, and store products under COSHH controls.

Clean and inspect toys, sand and water-play equipment on a schedule suited to use and contamination. Remove items that cannot be cleaned effectively. Cover sandpits when not in use and empty, clean and dry

water-play containers after use. During an outbreak, follow HPT advice on additional cleaning and record the arrangements.

Personal protective equipment and bodily fluids

Use disposable, suitable latex-free gloves and a plastic apron when contact with blood, bodily fluids, non-intact skin or contaminated items is likely; add eye or face protection if splashing is possible. Change PPE between people or tasks and wash hands after removal. Clean spills promptly using the school spill kit, disposable materials and an appropriate detergent/disinfectant in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the spill risk assessment. Dispose of waste through the appropriate waste stream; use the school's clinical waste arrangements where applicable. Never mix cleaning chemicals.

For pupils using continence aids, support independence and dignity, use a designated changing area, change PPE between pupils, clean surfaces and wash hands. Bag contaminated clothing securely with the pupil's name and give parents laundering advice; avoid rinsing soiled clothing by hand. Wash separately with a pre-wash cycle at the hottest temperature the fabric permits.

Sharps, bites and exposure

Do not handle a discarded needle directly. Keep others away and arrange safe collection in a sharps container by a trained person or seek help from the local authority or school nurse. If a used needle causes a puncture or scratch, or a human bite breaks the skin, wash the wound under warm running water with soap, cover it, seek immediate advice from A&E or occupational health, and record the incident. Exposure of blood or bodily fluids to broken skin or the eyes, nose or mouth also requires prompt medical advice. Follow accident reporting and any applicable RIDDOR assessment under the school's health and safety procedures.

Illness, exclusion and attendance

Parents and staff should tell the school promptly about a diagnosed infectious disease. A person who is too unwell to participate, or has more than mild respiratory symptoms such as a high temperature, should stay at home until well enough. Mild respiratory symptoms alone do not ordinarily require absence. The school uses the live UKHSA public health exclusion table for specific infections and follows individual healthcare or HPT advice where required. The same public health principles apply to pupils and staff.

Diarrhoea and vomiting normally require absence until 48 hours after symptoms stop. Some infections, including Shiga toxin-producing E. coli in young children, need additional clearance or HPT advice. Do not impose automatic exclusion where the current UKHSA table does not recommend it. Staff should consider the child's medical needs, access to education and safeguarding when planning support during absence.

COVID-19 is managed with other respiratory infections. Continue hand and respiratory hygiene, ventilation and routine cleaning. Additional measures during clusters or outbreaks should be proportionate and informed by the current UKHSA guidance and HPT advice. The school will review its risk assessment when a specific risk or national guidance changes.

Suspected cases and outbreaks

The member of staff who becomes aware of a potentially infectious illness informs the school office or senior leader, arranges appropriate supervision of an unwell pupil while awaiting collection, and obtains urgent medical help where needed. Maintain appropriate PPE and hygiene. Do not disclose a person's identity in general communications.

The Headmaster or delegate contacts the Surrey and Sussex HPT when the current UKHSA disease guidance calls for it, or if there is a higher than usual or rapidly increasing number of absences due to the same infection, severe disease or hospital admission, concurrent infections in a group, or an unusual or serious

illness. Two linked cases may warrant advice for some conditions, but are not a universal reporting threshold. HPT advice informs communications, exclusion, cleaning and any exceptional measures. Limiting attendance on public health grounds is a last resort handled through the appropriate incident management process.

Prepare: the numbers affected and attending; ages, classes or rooms; symptoms and onset dates; any admissions to hospital; food handlers affected; recent events or trips; known tests; relevant immunisation uptake; and people at higher risk. Keep an incident log of advice, decisions, action owners and review dates. Share identifiable information securely and only where needed.

Registered medical practitioners and diagnostic laboratories have the statutory notification duties under the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010, as amended. School staff must not use an old copied list of notifiable diseases as a substitute for the current HPT contact and UKHSA guidance. The school also follows any separate EYFS, Ofsted, food safety or health and safety notification requirement that applies to the incident.

People at higher risk and immunisation

The school works with parents, the school nursing or healthcare team and relevant staff to plan reasonable measures for people at higher risk from infection, including those with weakened immunity. Advice is individual and confidential. Encourage families and staff to follow the current NHS immunisation programme; support school-based vaccination arrangements, consent and proportionate information sharing in line with UKHSA guidance.

Once a worker informs the school in writing that they are pregnant, have given birth within the previous six months or are breastfeeding, the employer completes an individual risk assessment and adjusts work or controls where necessary. Pregnant staff exposed to a rash illness or another relevant infection should promptly seek advice from their midwife or GP and inform the school so its assessment can be reviewed. This includes possible exposure to measles, rubella, chickenpox and parvovirus B19.

Catering and food handlers

Food handlers must promptly tell their manager about diarrhoea, vomiting, infected skin lesions or any illness that may contaminate food. They must not work with or around open food while infectious and normally remain away from food handling until 48 hours after diarrhoea or vomiting has stopped naturally. The catering manager assesses return to work and seeks Environmental Health or HPT advice for specific infections, suspected food poisoning or outbreaks as appropriate. Staff follow the school's food safety management procedures and Food Standards Agency fitness-to-work guidance.

Animals and visits

Any animal contact is risk assessed and supervised, with hand washing immediately afterwards. Keep animal feeding and bedding away from food areas. Pregnant staff should not clean cat litter trays. Reptiles are unsuitable for children's settings because of salmonella risk. For educational visits, apply the same hygiene principles and any activity-specific controls.

Local contact and current guidance

Service	Contact or guidance
Surrey and Sussex UKHSA HPT	0344 225 3861; SE.AcuteResponse@ukhsa.gov.uk. For urgent advice outside office hours, use the same number; the published out-of-hours route is for health professionals. Check current details before use.
UKHSA school guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities
Current public health exclusion table	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/public-health-exclusion-periods-in-children-and-young-peoples-settings
Local HPT finder	https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team
Food Standards Agency	https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/food-handlers-fitness-to-work

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Person responsible: Duncan Sinclair, Headmaster